



LIBERALISM AND NATIONALISM IN GERMANY 1815-71

INTRODUCTION

- Middle ages--end of the 18th century--centre of Europe was occupied by the Holy Roman Empire
- 390 semi independent states
- Nominal rule of the Holy Roman Emperor/ Austrian emperor*



Austrian Emperor Francis II



- Prussia and Austria the most influential states within the Holy Roman Empire

INTRODUCTION

- Napoleon had crowned himself as the emperor of France in 1804
- The Holy Roman Empire collapsed in 1806, as a result of Napoleon's invasion -Napoleonic Wars 1803-1815
- Series of battles between France and the rest of Europe
- Napoleon's forces were strong enough to conquer and control the whole of mainland Europe (including the numerous German states)

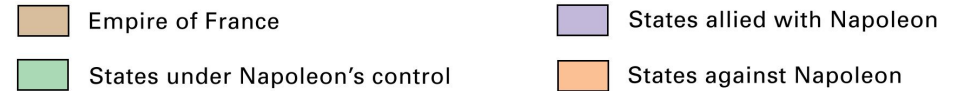


Napoleon Bonaparte

NAPOLEONIC WARS 1803-1815

- **Napoleon** *informally* brought the number of German states down to 39 and established the **Confederation of the Rhine**, a league of **16 German states** on the west-bringing further unification to Germany

THE GREATEST EXTENT OF THE NAPOLEONIC EMPIRE (1812)

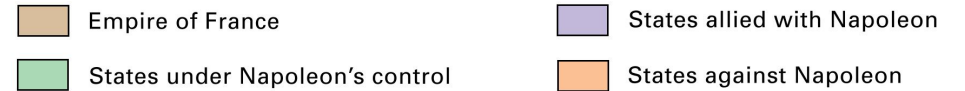


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Side note: The Confederation of the Rhine was an alliance of various German states that served as a satellite and major military ally of the French Empire with Napoleon as its “Protector,” and was created as a buffer state from any future aggression from Austria, Russia, or Prussia against France

THE GREATEST EXTENT OF THE NAPOLEONIC EMPIRE (1812)



AUSTRIA

- Emperor Francis I
- Austrian foreign minister: Klemens von Metternich
- The Austrian Empire had a population of 25 million and extended over 647 000 square kilometres (different ethnic groups under its rule were Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, Poles and even some northern Italians)
- The majority of the empire's subjects were Roman Catholics, loyal to the Pope



Austrian Emperor Francis I

THE IMPACT OF NAPOLEONIC WARS 1803-1815

- The French armies brought with them the ideas of the 18th-century **Enlightenment** -a challenge to outdated political and social structures
- They replaced the diverse laws and judicial processes of the various German states with their own legal system
- In reaction, many **German thinkers began to emphasise the distinctiveness of their own culture and historical past** of the German people

E.g. writer **J.G. Herder**, who popularised the concept of *Volksgeist* ('*spirit of the people*'), the idea that each nation had its own individual identity, based around a shared heritage and language -first stirrings of a sense of **German nationhood**

THE IMPACT OF NAPOLEONIC WARS 1803-1815

- German people began to understand the importance of uniting against the French occupation (for defence)
- After its defeat by Napoleon, Prussia, one of the most important states, reorganised its government and army
- This enabled it to join with Austria and Russia to expel the French forces

Napoleon was defeated at

1. Leipzig in 1813
 2. Waterloo in 1815 -bringing an end to the Confederation of Rhine
- These battles helped develop a sense of national pride for the Germans

THE IMPACT OF METTERNICH'S SYSTEM ON THE STATES OF GERMANY



Klemens von Metternich

The European leaders faced a challenge from the related ideas of **liberalism** and **nationalism**, which were products of the French revolutionary era

These leaders were political and social conservatives

They were determined to restore stability after the years of upheaval caused by the revolution in France and the movements of French armies across the continent

They wanted to recreate the rule of the old royal families who had lost power during the previous 20 years

CONGRESS OF VIENNA 1814-1815

- September 1814
- A congress of European nations met in Vienna (Austria) to discuss the problems caused by the wars, and to establish new boundaries on the continent
- Chaired by Austrian foreign minister, Klemens von Metternich* (1809-48) Chancellor (1821-48)
- The most important states, the Quadruple Alliance: Austria, Prussia, Britain and Russia

France, whose monarchy had been restored after the defeat of Napoleon* (Napoleon abdicated as emperor in March 1814, Louis XVIII, the brother of Louis XVI, was installed as king) attended but had no decision- making powers

METTERNICH SYSTEM

- The '**Metternich System**' was designed to **maintain the rule of absolute monarchy** in the Austrian Empire, and the continuation of similar political systems in other European states
- **Metternich** was deeply suspicious of change, once describing the words '*liberty*' and '*equality*' as the **source of evil** -mislead the masses
- **Nationalism** threatened the rule of its royal family, the Habsburgs
- He feared that if Germans, or members of other nationalities, were allowed their independence, the empire might collapse
- He avoided stationing troops in the parts of the empire from which they came, as he believed this would reduce the chances of organised nationalist opposition developing
- His was a negative policy, which relied on **repressive methods** such as **press censorship** and **a network of secret agents** who spied on political radicals causing resentment from the people under his rule

THE GERMAN CONFEDERATION 1815

- At the **Congress of Vienna in 1815**, the allied forces decided to **dissolve the Confederation of the Rhine**
- They wanted to eradicate the memory of French occupation
- The German states now formed the **German Confederation (Bund)** of **39 states** under the control of **Austria**
- **Prussia** gained land including **Rhineland** while Poland was granted to Russia
- These varied considerably in size, from kingdoms like **Bavaria** and **Saxony** to self-governing city states like **Hamburg**
- It was not a united Germany and in fact the intention was to avoid such a development
- It aimed to **protect its members** and give them a stronger voice in Europe





German Confederation
1815

- Germany in 1815 did not exist as a single unified country
- It consisted of 39 states
- Much of the territory lay within the boundaries of an organisation known as the **German Confederation**





Europe after the Congress of Vienna 1815

THE GERMAN CONFEDERATION

The German Confederation had a **Diet or Bundestag (Parliament)** but it did not achieve much as decisions had to be unanimous

- It met in **Frankfurt**
- It controlled the **foreign policies** of the member states, but the individual rulers continued to manage their own internal affairs
- It **did not have its own civil service** and there was **no attempt to develop it as an economic area**
- In 1821, **an attempt to create a federal defence force failed** as a result of conflict over who should command such an organisation and how it should be funded
- Each state had its **own ruler, laws and army**
- The Diet was always **chaired by the Austrian representative**
- **Austria also had a veto over any attempt to change the constitution**, and it could usually count on the support of the main southern states – Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden and Hesse-Darmstadt – in a vote

These states were near each other and, with their predominantly Catholic populations, were culturally more sympathetic to Austria than to northern, Protestant, Prussia



German Confederation
1815

PRUSSIA

- The largest German state was **Prussia**, a mainly rural state in the north-east, with Berlin as its capital
- It was ruled by an authoritarian monarch, **King Friedrich Wilhelm III**, who governed with the support of a conservative landowning class, the *Junkers*
- The *Junkers* also provided the core of the Prussian army's officer class



King Friedrich Wilhelm III

PRUSSIA

- In the 1815 peace settlement (**Congress of Vienna**), Prussia gained territory -including the **Rhineland** in the west, an industrialised area separated from the main part of Prussia (doubling the population of Prussia to more than 10 million)
- It was the only possible future rival to **Austria** for the domination of Germany, but at this stage both Prussia and Austria had an interest in preventing political change in Germany



King Friedrich Wilhelm III

German Confederation
established 1815



THE INFLUENCE OF LIBERAL IDEAS & EMERGENCE OF A MIDDLE CLASS



WHAT IS LIBERALISM?

Liberal thinkers promoted:

- The **idea of an elected parliament to pass laws and run the country**, rather than power held solely by an **absolute monarch**
- They also championed **freedom of speech** and an **end to censorship**

Liberalism, which the **Metternich System** sought to suppress, was primarily an ideology of **educated middle-class people** consisting of **two main groups**:

WHAT IS LIBERALISM?

1. **Professionals** (lawyers, officials, doctors and university teachers)
2. **Business people** -mainly concentrated in the cities of the **Rhineland**, and in ports such as **Hamburg**

Most were merchants who controlled small workshops or employed large numbers of domestic workers

In Prussia, they had benefited from the removal of privileges that had been enjoyed up to the early 19th century by the traditional **guilds**, allowing anyone to become an employer without first joining one of these organisations



- The emergence of the **middle class** also led to growth of **newspaper press**
- Increase in **literacy** and **awareness of public affairs** led to the establishment of societies to promote **cultural activities**
- The middle classes experienced a sense of exclusion from the upper levels of the social order, which were still dominated by a **privileged landowning aristocracy**

In Prussia, for example, the aristocratic **Junker class**, which owned large agricultural estates in the eastern part of the country, controlled most of the higher positions in the **army** and **civil service**

Middle-class liberals wanted (**political aspect**):

- People to have some say in government, but they did **not** want to see the establishment of fully **democratic, republican** systems of government*
- Countries to have representative assemblies or parliaments, elected by property-owning people like themselves, with **constitutional monarchy** as their preferred form of government
- Certain **guarantees of freedom**, such as the **rights to free speech** and **fair trials**

This was a middle way between the authoritarian rule of an old-style monarchy, and democracy, which was seen as a dangerous system leading to mob rule and the seizure of power by masses of poor, uneducated people*

e.g. **The French Revolution**, which had been marked by violence against people and property

Middle-class liberals wanted **(economic aspect)**:

Many liberals also believed in the idea of **laissez-faire economics** (meaning 'leave it alone'), in which trade and business functioned **without government interference**

They wanted to **remove tariffs**, which restricted trade between countries

Economic liberals wanted **to promote competition between businesses**, which they argued would **reduce prices** and **improve the quality of goods** for consumers

- **Liberals** believed that, if given freedom, people would work to improve their circumstances, and this would help society as a whole to make progress
- There was a great deal of intellectual excitement in the period 1815–48, with the publication of books and pamphlets and the staging of public lectures
- It seems unlikely, however, that this activity reached more than a limited circle of like-minded, well-off, educated people
- Some liberals took their ideas to working-class areas, for example in Hamburg

However, most **workers** interested in political ideas -tended to be **radicals** who favoured the **creation of a democratic republic**

Many of them expected to achieve this through **popular uprising** rather than **rational debate**

GROWTH OF NATIONALIST IDEAS



Assassination of writer August von Kotzebue

WHAT IS NATIONALISM?

Nationalists believed that people of the same race, language, culture or history *should be united in an independent nation of their own*

They should *govern themselves independently from the rule or influence of other nations*

Throughout the 19th century, the populations of the separate states began to develop a sense they were not just citizens of their own individual states, but also were part of a German volk (people)

Support for national unity in Germany at this time was limited mainly to small sections of society – literate, professional people and members of student associations known as the **Burschenschaften**

HOW STRONG WAS NATIONALISM IN GERMANY?

- Rather than a strong sense of national identity, most ordinary Germans felt greater loyalty to the region where they lived
- Communications were poor and people were usually born, lived, married, worked and died in the same villages or neighbouring towns
- Each region had its own traditions and customs
- The majority of people were peasants who worked in agriculture
- They faced a daily struggle for existence and were likely to have had little interest in abstract ideas of this kind
- There was little desire to see the creation of a strong central government, which might impose additional taxes on the population, interfere with civil liberties and draft people into the armed forces

HOW STRONG WAS NATIONALISM IN GERMANY?

- In Germany, there was a common language and culture, but there was no religious unity
- The southern states, such as Bavaria and Baden, were mainly Catholic. So, too, were the western provinces of the Rhineland and Westphalia, and West Prussia and Posen in the east
- By contrast, Prussia proper, like most of northern Germany, was largely Protestant
- In addition, the industrialised Rhineland was economically very different from the agricultural regions to the south and east

- Germans enjoyed relatively high levels of literacy, but most early-19th-century newspapers concerned themselves with local rather than all-German issues
- As we have seen, a sense of German cultural nationalism first emerged in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, in reaction to the invasions by France
- Between 1815 and 1848, these ideas filtered through to the educated middle classes
- In the cities, some workers were influenced by more radical democratic ideas, based on the **sovereignty** of the people, but they remained a minority of the population

THE CONSERVATIVE REACTION TO NATIONALISM

Metternich was successful in containing **liberal** and **nationalist** movements in the decade and a half after the **Congress of Vienna**

After a member of a liberal student association murdered a conservative writer **August von Kotzebue**, **Metternich** in August 1819 through the **Diet** passed the repressive **Carlsbad Decrees**

These had three key features:

1. **Universities:** Each university was to have an 'extraordinary commissioner' assigned to it, to supervise the teaching programme (**Liberal professors** who undermined the established order were to be removed from their posts & **unauthorised student organisations** were to be dissolved)
2. **The press:** The member states of the **Confederation**, and the **Diet**, were to censor the newspaper press
3. **A central investigating commission** was to be set up in Mainz to root out organisations promoting liberal and nationalist ideas

Disband the **Burschenschaften

SIDENOTE:

- Vormarz (Pre-March) years 1815-1848 [March 1848 Revolution]
- Middle class spread liberal ideas from -minorities to masses

VORMARZ (PRE-MARCH) YEARS 1815-1848

1820s

- Metternich was able to suppress the impact of liberalism and nationalism during the 1820s
- Congress of Troppau 1820: Russia, Prussia and Austria to snub such activities

SPREAD OF LIBERALISM

- In time, however, liberalism took a stronger hold across Germany, especially in the south
- This was partly in response to a revolution which occurred in Paris in July 1830
- **Louis Philippe** established a **parliamentary monarchy**, based on the consent of the educated, property-owning middle class

Side note: French Revolution

- **Louis XVI** 1774-1792 (executed in 1793)
- **Napoleon Bonaparte** 1804-1814 (defeated 1815)
- **Louis XVIII** 1815-1824 (by the Quadruple Alliance)
- **Charles X** 1824-1830
- **Louis Philippe** 1830-1848

VORMARZ (PRE-MARCH) YEARS 1815-1848

1830s

- Background -revolution in Paris July 1830
- In four small German states – Saxony, Hanover, Hesse-Cassel and Brunswick -rulers were obliged to grant **liberal constitutions** and increased **press freedom** allowed more criticism of governments
- Bavaria, Wurttemberg and Baden - constitutions already existed -liberal seats in the parliament
- In May 1832, nationalists organised the **Hambach Festival in Bavaria**, where **liberal** and **nationalist** ideas were openly discussed
- A group called **Young Germany** was established, which called for a *united Germany based on liberal principles*

CONSERVATIVE REACTION TO LIBERALISM & NATIONALISM 1830s

Metternich reacted to these developments with predictable harshness

Although the organisers of the Hambach Festival were acquitted of wrongdoing by an ordinary court, they were then tried and imprisoned by a special police court

Metternich persuaded the princes to accept a new round of repressive measures (through the Diet):

The Six Articles of June 1832:

- Limited the rights of elected assemblies in states which had constitutions
- Declared the supremacy of federal law over the laws of the individual states

The Ten Articles of July 1832:

- Banned political meetings and festivals
- Illegal to wear the colours of the student associations in scarves and ties

RECAP

Nationalism:

- access to political power
- reduction of taxes
- removal of trade restrictions

Liberalism:

- establishment of state constitutions
- civil equality/ fair trials
- Freedom of speech/ freedom of press
- direct suffrage
- Laissez-faire/ no trade barriers

Liberalism & Nationalism Activities/groups:

1815

- *Burschenschaften*

1820s

1830s

- Louis Philippe
- Young Germany
- Hambach Festival (Bavaria)

Conservative Reaction:

- Carlsbad Decrees 1819
- Congress of Troppau 1820
- Six Articles June 1832
- Ten Articles July 1831

In fact, there was never a real danger of revolution in Germany in this period

1. The **liberals** and **nationalists** were too few
2. **Austria** could always count on its **control of the Confederation**, and the **support of Prussia** in suppressing opposition

3. Most of the princes ensured that they kept the levers of power in their hands when they granted constitutions

- They retained the right to veto unwelcome proposals and could usually rely on the support of the upper houses of parliament, dominated by the aristocracy
- The princes used a variety of means to limit the power of elected assemblies:
 - restricting the vote to wealthy property owners
 - using indirect voting or having different classes vote in separate estates
 - with greater weighting attached to those in which the upper classes were represented

These devices had the effect of restricting the free expression of public opinion

*E.g. In 1837, the new king of **Hanover**, **Ernest Augustus**, abolished the constitution that had been granted by his predecessor, and seven professors who objected lost their posts at the University of Göttingen*

*The '**Göttingen Seven**' included Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, two famous brothers whose collection of traditional folk tales helped to promote a sense of German culture*

THE IMPACT OF ZOLLVEREIN 1834



GERMAN ECONOMIC GROWTH

Economic growth/progress -**key factor** in the long-term development of a **united Germany**

- Germany's geographical situation -could trade easily with both east and west
- 70% of the population still made their living from **agriculture**
- Mostly **Rhineland** and **Saxony** were industrialised
- The main growth areas were in the production of **consumer goods** e.g. textiles
- Heavy manufacturing began to take off from the 1840s (rapid development of railways especially in **Prussia**)
- Railway building attracted capital investment and stimulated the **coal and iron industries**
-encouraging the emergence of larger industrial firms and the rise of **new urban centres**

OBSTRUCTIONS IN GERMAN ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Customs barriers between the members of the German Confederation **restricted growth & slowed down process**
- A product crossing a border was likely to be **taxed** by the territory it was entering
- Larger states such as **Prussia** often had their own internal boundaries and **imposed tolls** on goods
- All this entailed the time-consuming completion of bureaucratic paperwork at borders, **increasing the costs of transport**
- German industries had to contend with **competition from foreign products**, and had **no competitive advantage** over non-German ones outside

OPPORTUNITIES IN GERMAN ECONOMIC GROWTH

Prussia led the way in promoting change

- In 1818, it abolished its 67 internal customs barriers (other German states followed)
- It protected its own industries from foreign competition by charging a tariff on imports

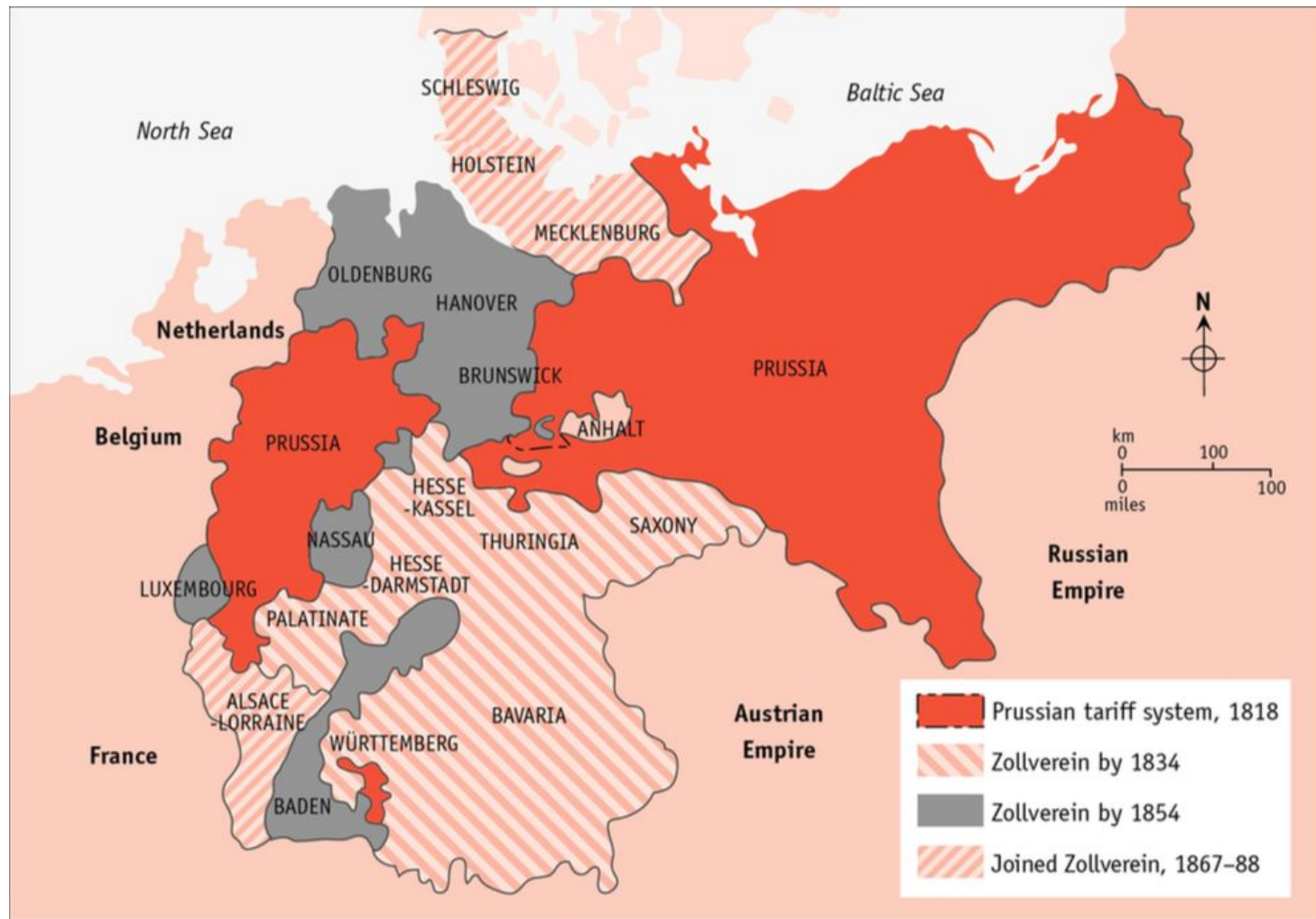
This was initially set at a low level in order to discourage smuggling and so that foreign countries were less likely to retaliate with high tariffs of their own

- It worked to remove barriers to trade within the **German Confederation** (create a larger market & reduce the price of goods)

Appearance of new roads and railways & steamboat services on the Rhine and Elbe rivers also helped the growth of the Prussian economy

THE ZOLLVEREIN AND THE RISE OF PRUSSIA

- 1834 -Prussia had formed the **Zollverein**, a **customs union** of 18 German states
- This was the **largest free-trade area** in Europe
- Soon comprising **25 states**, with a combined population of 26 million
- Aim of Zollverein: **to manage tariffs and economic policies & promote economic expansion (member states)**
- Income from tariffs was divided between the member states in proportion to their population size
- Soon they were linked by a rapidly growing rail network, centred on Berlin, and in time they adopted a **common currency** and **system of weights and measures**





However, the Zollverein was also a symbol of **division**:

- many states in the south had not joined
- Austria had excluded itself (not important/protect its own industry from competitors)
- Prussia can be seen to have used the Zollverein to increase its influence
- The economic success of Prussia was envied by many of the German states

Zollverein effectively divided the German states into two camps - those under **Prussian** influence and those under **Austrian**

The **Zollverein** helped Prussia assume a predominant economic position within Germany, but it did not follow that it would also take on its political leadership

Decisions in its governing body, the **Zollverein Congress**, had to be unanimous, and the states were determined to retain their independence

Nationalists who hoped that the **Zollverein** might provide a basis for a political union were disappointed

One of the nationalists' key weaknesses was that they could not agree on where the frontiers of a German state should be:

Some favoured a **'large Germany' (Grossdeutschland)** which would include German-speaking regions of Austria, and which would be dominated by Austria

Others preferred a **'small Germany' (Kleindeutschland)** without those regions, which would therefore be dominated by Prussia

These preferences to some extent reflected the continuing cultural differences between Protestant northern Germany and the Catholic southern states

The industrialised Rhineland remained more economically developed than the still largely agricultural east

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN THE 1840S



PRUSSIA

King **Friedrich Wilhelm III**, who had denied granting a constitution, died in 1840

Prussia a new king, **Friedrich Wilhelm IV**, succeeded to the throne in **1840**

- He was a complex and unstable character, who believed that God expected him to rule his subjects **firmly but kindly**
- Absolutist to constitutional monarch*
- He **relaxed censorship** and **gave greater powers to the provincial Diets** or assemblies, but he rejected demands for a single parliament/ united diet for all Prussian territories



Friedrich Wilhelm IV

BACKGROUND TO 1848

- The year 1848 is known as the 'year of revolutions',
- February - toppling of the monarchy of King Louis Philippe in France
- March -Metternich was forced into exile by disturbances in Vienna

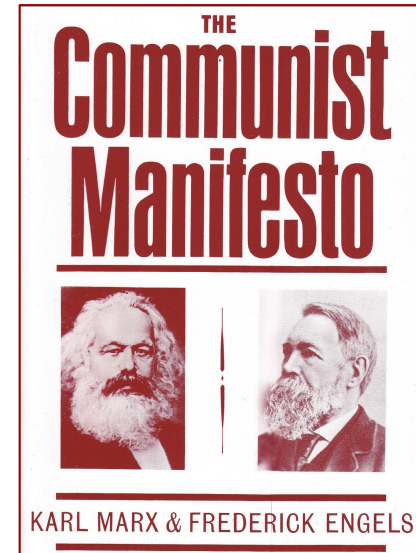
However, revolutions were short-lived and authoritarian regimes soon re- established control

The revolutions were not just caused by **liberalism** and **nationalism**

The events of 1848–49 had a variety of causes – economic, social and political

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CAUSES OF 1848 THE REVOLUTION

- Publication of **Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto** (21st Feb 1848)
- Continuing poor living standards for the **peasants** in the countryside under **Junkers**
- Two years of **bad harvests** in 1846 and 1847 (corn and potato)
- **Cholera pandemic**
- **Increasing population**
- **Rising food prices**
- **Recession in the textile industry** in 1847
- The economic downturn led employers to **cut wages**
- **Poor working conditions** in factories/ long hours in an unhealthy environment
- Cheap alcohol -**drunkenness**



SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

Skilled workers:

- Cologne and Bonn
- politically aware
- elected representative assemblies to discuss grievances
- met at Frankfurt
- drew up **Industrial Code** (regulate working conditions)

Frankfurt Parliament turned it down**

Educated middle-class:

- Motivated & influenced by ideas of liberalism and nationalism
- Resented the hold on power of the privileged nobility, who dominated the army and civil service
- Wanted **political reforms**

THE OUTBREAK OF REVOLUTION IN GERMANY

- In **Württemberg**, the ruler, Wilhelm I, was pressured into appointing liberal ministers and granting a new constitution
- King Friedrich Augustus II of **Saxony** agreed to similar demands
- Demands for a bill of rights were accepted by the princes of **Hesse-Darmstadt, Nassau** and other states
- The only German ruler who gave up his throne was Ludwig I of **Bavaria**

FRANKFURT PARLIAMENT

- A meeting at Heidelberg in March 1848, attended by representatives from **six states**
- **Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, Nassau and Frankfurt**
- led to the summoning of a ***Vorparlament*** or '**pre- parliament**'
- It met in **Frankfurt** to elect a Parliament -**Frankfurt parliament**
- role of parliament would be to draw up a **constitution** for a united Germany
- Each state in the German Confederation would be asked to hold elections to this parliament, using its own voting system

RECAP

- 1815-1848 Vormärz (pre-March) years* Recap 1
- 1834 -Prussia had formed the **Zollverein**, a customs union of 18 German states
- Aim of Zollverein: to manage tariffs and economic policies & promote economic expansion (member states)
- Social and economic causes of the **1848 Revolution**

Prussia

1840 King Friedrich Wilhelm IV took over

- Needed to build railway (link agricultural lands to the markets)
- Railway links would help the

Junkers (land-owning aristocracy)

- Called a National Assembly "United Diet" 1847 to get support for the project ↳ for Prussia

The United Diet due to crop failure & inflation started to demand a constitution first King refused & dissolved the Diet

March
1848

Unrest / call for political change in Berlin

↳ due to:

① France's monarchy overthrown

② Metternich was forced to flee

↳ Prussia's
Capital

Exile in
England,
returned in
1851

workers → wanted better pay / working conditions
middle-class → wanted more rights

→ King Friedrich Wilhelm IV appeared in public
in a black, gold & red robe → supporting
the nationalist movement

Announced an assembly to draw a constitution
but then dissolved it

1850 new constitution → King to retain essential
political dominance power
of the Junkers

INITIAL RESPONSES OF THE GERMAN STATES TO THE 1848–49 REVOLUTIONS



THE FRANKFURT PARLIMENT

- A national parliament, met in **Frankfurt** (from May 1848 to June 1849)
- **Aim:** establish a **United Germany** under a **constitutional monarchy** & **draft a constitution**
- 596 members
- Each state was allowed to choose its own voting system to select its representatives
- Not truly representative of the German people -poor excluded
- Members: all-male and most were well-off professionals (middle-class)
- Mockingly described as '**the professors' parliament**'
- **Jacob Grimm** and three others of the '**Göttingen Seven**' were among those elected
- Its first president was **Heinrich von Gagern**, a lawyer who had been a member of the ***Burschenschaften*** at university

- In June 1848, the parliament set up a 'Provisional Central Power' under a liberal Austrian prince, the Archduke Johann, which was to govern until a permanent constitution had been agreed
- In December, the parliament approved 50 fundamental citizens' rights, including equality before the law, freedom of the press and freedom from arrest without a warrant

Occupation	Number of members
Lawyers	200
Nobles	90
University professors	49
Principals and teachers	40
Writers and journalists	35
Merchants and industrialists	30
Clergy	26
Doctors	12
Handicraft workers	4
Peasants	1

Table 3.2: Occupations of members of the Frankfurt Parliament, 1848-49

The constitution was completed in March 1849:

- the German states were to be united as a **German Empire** headed by a **German Emperor**
- government would be provided by **an elected parliament**
- the government would **represent the populations of all states**
- **Central government** will have more authority over the German states than the Diet of the old Confederation
- the new **German Empire** would replace the existing **German Confederation**
- the Crown was offered to Prussia's **Frederick William IV**

But the Frankfurt Parliament and the attempt to unify Germany through political reform **failed**

Frederick William was not a strong enough leader to unite Germany

He refused to *"accept a crown from the gutter"* because it had not been offered by the other German Princes

THE COLLAPSE OF THE FRANKFURT PARLIAMENT



A DIVIDED AND INEFFECTIVE PARLIAMENT

The Frankfurt Parliament had several **key weaknesses**:

1. Its members could not agree on the geographical borders of new Germany

There was debate in the parliament about conflicting proposals for a ***Kleindeutschland***, dominated by Prussia, and a ***Grossdeutschland***, which would mean the continued leadership of Austria

2. **Friedrich Wilhelm** was a proud man who would not accept a gift from the Frankfurt Parliament, whose legal authority he refused to recognise

The parliament eventually agreed on a German constitution in March 1849, which was to involve an emperor governing with the support of two houses of parliament, one elected and the other consisting of the princes of the Confederation

The crown of this empire was offered to Friedrich Wilhelm IV (Prussia was also the only state with the military strength to resist Austria)



3. **Army's loyalty** was with **Prussian King** since the minister of war Eduard von Peucker, was also Prussian

Bavaria and Austria didn't promise to help

*E.g. disputed provinces of **Schleswig-Holstein** Prussia and Denmark*



*E.g. disputed provinces of **Schleswig-Holstein** Prussia and Denmark*

*In March 1848, the German-speaking population of these territories rebelled against an attempt to integrate them fully into Denmark. They demanded admission to the German Confederation as a single state. The **Frankfurt Parliament** authorised the Prussian army to fight Denmark over the issue. The Prussian army advanced, but soon halted and **signed a truce at Malmo in August 1848**, in response to international pressure.*

WHY DID THE FRANKFURT PARLIAMENT FAIL?

1. The parliament's members lacked political experience & were slow to organise themselves and decide how to proceed

2. They struggled to resolve differences between moderate liberals, radicals and conservatives

- Liberals - wanted moderate constitutional reform/ political change
- Radicals, who sought more far-reaching political changes
- Small group of conservatives: preserve rights of individual states

Working-class revolutionaries wanted improvements to their living and working conditions

WHY DID THE FRANKFURT PARLIAMENT FAIL?

3. Parliament's president **Heinrich von Gagern** had no character needed to dominate the assembly/ direct debate
4. The **German princes** did not initially oppose the parliament because their own authority had been weakened by the revolutionary events of spring 1848 but by they started to recover



Heinrich von Gagern

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Side note

Austrian Emperors:

- Francis I 1804-1835
- Ferdinand I 1835-1848
- Franz Joseph I **1848**

WEAKNESSES OF THE REVOLUTIONS

- Liberals -wanted moderate constitutional reform/ political change
- Radicals, who sought more far-reaching political changes
- Working-class revolutionaries wanted improvements to their living and working conditions

Another important reason for the ultimate failure of the revolutions was the recovery of the **Austrian monarchy**

Although initially caught off guard in March 1848, it soon recovered and, **with the support of Prussia**, set about restoring monarchical power in the German lands

ASSIGNMENT 1

QUESTION:

- (a) Why did the Frankfurt Parliament fail to achieve its aims? (10)
- (b) Examine the causes and consequences of the Zollverein (20)

RECAP: FAILURE OF 1848-49 REVOLUTIONS

Overall, the experience of 1848–49 had demonstrated the weakness of **liberal nationalism**:

- Initially caught off guard, the **princes reasserted their and recovered their status**
- The **revolutions had been unplanned** and their **leaders lacked the necessary organisation and resources** to achieve their goals
- **Division over aims** and methods between **liberals** and **radicals** was fatal to their chances of success
- The **working classes**, by and large, were not enthused by the political visions of the **middle-class revolutionaries**

Those who had such high hopes in the spring of 1848 were left overwhelmingly disappointed

REASSERTION OF
AUSTRIAN POWER:
'THE HUMILIATION OF OLMUTZ'



Treaty of Olmutz

PRUSSIA AND AUSTRIA AFTER THE 1848 REVOLUTIONS

Friedrich Wilhelm rejected the Frankfurt Parliament's offer of a German crown, but he was interested in promoting unity in **northern** and **central** Germany under **Prussian control**

In 1849–50, he put forward **a plan for a union of German states** based on a strong **central government**, **an assembly** elected on a limited franchise, and **Prussian control of the army**

- **Austria** was to be excluded but would be in a special relationship with this new **Reich**
- **Saxony** and **Hanover** agreed to support the plan, concluding the **Three Kings' Alliance** with **Prussia**
- Some smaller states agreed to join when the scheme was launched at **Erfurt in Saxony** in **March 1850**
- Most of the German princes, however, suspected that this '**Erfurt Union**' was a vehicle for Prussian domination
- Now that Austria was once again able to assert itself, they also feared the consequences of its disapproval

The Revolution of 1848–49 had been only a temporary interruption to Austria's status at the head of the Confederation

Erfurt Union:
"Three King's Alliance"



THE COLLAPSE OF THE ERFURT UNION

As **Austria** recovered from the revolution in **Vienna**, it reacted to the **Prussian-led Erfurt Union** project by reviving the **Diet** of the **Confederation**

By now, Austria had a new and able foreign minister, **Prince Felix Schwarzenberg**, who was determined to uphold the authority of the Habsburg monarchy

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Side note:

Austrian Foreign Ministers:

- **Klemens von Metternich**
1809-**1848**
- 2 others during **1848**
- **Prince Felix Schwarzenberg**
1848-1852

THE COLLAPSE OF THE ERFURT UNION

Prince Felix Schwarzenberg put forward a rival scheme to the Erfurt Union:

a **Grossdeutschland** in which Austria, Prussia and the larger states would govern together

In response to this proposal, **Hanover**, **Baden** and **Saxony** abandoned the Erfurt Union, leaving Prussia isolated



The conflict came to a head when **Elector (Prince) Friedrich of Hesse-Kassel** asked for help in a dispute with his parliament



THE COLLAPSE OF THE ERFURT UNION

- The Prince appealed to Austria and his parliament asked for Prussian support
- **Schwarzenberg** insisted that only the Confederation could respond to this appeal
- Prussia was simply not strong enough to resist when Austrian troops entered Hesse to restore the ruler's authority. Its army was still weak
- In addition, Austria acted with the support of Europe's other leading conservative power, Russia
- It was not in **Friedrich Wilhelm's** nature to try to lead a nationalist movement of German states against Austria

HUMILIATION OF OLMUTZ

- **'humiliation of Olmütz'** : November 1850, **Prussia** agreed to abandon the **Erfurt Union**
- At this meeting, held in present-day Czech Republic, it effectively gave up its claim to the leadership of the German states
- It seemed that Austria had triumphed and that the old, unequal partnership with a **'humiliated'** Prussia had been restored
- On the other hand, the **smaller states** rejected the **Schwarzenberg plan**, as it favoured their larger neighbours
- The result, in May 1851, was an agreement to **return to the old framework of the German Confederation**

PRUSSIA'S PROSPECTS

Why then did Prussia emerge as the state that would eventually lead German unification?

The reality was that, although Austria formally appeared the victor in the dispute over the Erfurt Union, it had some important disadvantages:

- Prussia's position in north-central Germany gave it an opportunity to dominate its neighbours, whereas Austria, in the south had its army busy controlling nationalist movements in **Hungary** and northern **Italy**
- Events in Germany were indirectly affected by the outbreak of the **Crimean War of 1854–56**:

Britain and **France** vs **Russia** (fearing Russia's expansionist motives)

Austria made a major diplomatic mistake by not backing **Russia** (the other leading power with an interest in maintaining the **1815 Vienna settlement**)

Russia had supported **Austria** over the **Erfurt Union** and was angered by its apparent ingratitude

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS AFTER
1849: THE GROWTH OF
INDUSTRIALISATION & THE
ZOLLVEREIN



PRUSSIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

Prussia was the most economically advanced of the German states (its growth outpacing Austria)

- Between 1850 and 1860: Prussia's **rail network** increased by 46% stimulating other sectors like iron and steel
- **Coal output** grew from 1,961,000 tonnes in 1850 to 8,526,000 tonnes by 1865
- Railway expansion was achieved through a partnership between the state and the private sector
- In return for supplying some of the funding for railway building, the government was able to collect interest payments
- Import/export dues from the **Zollverein**, the sale of **timber from the Crown lands** and royalties from **mining** rights, rose government's income (made it less necessary to raise taxes)

PRUSSIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

Prussia was in a strong position to lead German unification by the end of the 1850s:

- Rapid growth of its **population**
- Successful **banking system and coinage**
- **Iron and steel industries** provided the materials for its weapons
- Expanding **rail network** could be used to mobilise its troops
- In 1862, a **Franco-Prussian trade treaty** helped Prussia's development further
- Economic growth boosted the **material prosperity** and **self-confidence** of the middle classes in western Europe

PRUSSIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

In 1859, many business and professional people came together to found the **National Society**, or **Nationalverein**

The society called for **nationwide elections** and the **creation of a strong national authority**, replacing the **Confederation**

It was prepared to support the transfer of the Confederation's powers to the Prussian government

However, the society was never likely to become the centre of a mass movement

It had only 25 000 members, mostly from the middle classes, so its actual influence was relatively limited

MEANWHILE IN AUSTRIA...

Austria was hit hard by economic downturn in the late 1850s -,costs of maintaining military garrisons throughout its empire rose

In the era of Metternich, it had succeeded in keeping Prussia on its side by appealing to its fear of revolution

Since the **humiliation of Olmütz**, however, this uneasy partnership had been replaced by outright resentment

As Prussia grew in strength during the 1850s, it became **possible for it to challenge Austria's supremacy** – if it could also find the necessary political leadership to do so

THE ZOLLVEREIN IN THE 1850S

One of the most important features of the 1850s was the continued growth of the **Zollverein**

- **Hanover** became a member in 1851 - enabled Prussia to control trade to **North Sea ports**
- The **Zollverein** was by now **Europe's fourth largest economy, after Britain, France and Belgium**
- Austria wanted the whole of the Habsburg Empire to join, but this was unacceptable to most of the existing members (It would have entailed high tariff barriers to protect Austria's less- efficient industries)

Debate: Zollverein importance in unification*

- States joined for materialistic gains not unification
- Larger states supported smaller ones

OTTO VON MANTEUFFEL'S REFORMS

- **Otto von Manteuffel** was Minister-President (prime minister) of Prussia from 1850 to 1858
- He was a conservative -wanted to strengthen the bonds between the monarchy and the people
- His aim :promote economic and social development, without making concessions to radicals who wanted a more democratic political system
- He also blocked traditionalists who wanted to restrict the foundation of new banks, which they regarded as encouraging risky financial speculation
- He helped to foster a culture of private enterprise by reducing state control of the coal and iron industries

OTTO VON MANTEUFFEL'S REFORMS

- **Manteuffel** sought to discourage the poorer members of society from supporting liberal ideas by undertaking social reforms
- His government provided low-interest loans to help peasants buy their landholdings from the landowning aristocracy
- In areas where there was excessive population pressure on the land, financial assistance was provided to peasants who were willing to move
- He also introduced measures to improve the working conditions and pay of factory workers

All this was achieved without the involvement of parliament and without harming the interests of the industrial middle classes

As the 1850s drew to a close, the '**German problem**' remained unresolved:

Prussia's advantages:

- Spurt in **economic development/ Strong Zollverein**
- **Strong state structure** (gave it the potential to challenge Austria for the leadership of Germany)

Friedrich Wilhelm IV and his successor, **Wilhelm I**, presided over an exclusively German kingdom, whereas Austria was distracted managing its empire

Prussia's limitations:

- Its **army was in need of modernisation**
- It **could not count on the support of many of the smaller German states**
- Any move to dislodge Austria from its position **would depend on the attitude of the other great powers**

3.3 WHAT WERE BISMARCK'S INTENTIONS FOR PRUSSIA AND GERMANY FROM 1862 TO 1866?

REASONS FOR BISMARCK'S APPOINTMENT
AS MINISTER-PRESIDENT; HIS ATTITUDES
TOWARDS LIBERALISM AND NATIONALISM



Otto von Bismarck & the Prussian King Wilhelm I

PRUSSIA

Friedrich Wilhelm III (1797-1840) during the signing of the Congress of Vienna

Friedrich Wilhelm IV (son) during the 1848-49 Revolutions

Wilhelm I became regent of Prussia in 1858, when his brother, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, fell ill



PRUSSIA

Wilhelm I ascended the throne in 1861 and accepted the constitution

He was primarily concerned to strengthen the army

His fears for Prussian security were aroused when **Franco-Austrian War 1859** broke out:

- **France** supported the **Kingdom of Piedmont** in driving **Austrian** forces out of northern Italy (process of Italian unification)
- The **Prussian army** was partly mobilised in order to deter possible French moves in the **Rhineland**



PRUSSIAN ARMY & LANDWEHR

- This experience revealed serious organisational weaknesses
- Prussia's professional army equalled **150 000** soldiers
- Approx **40 000** young men underwent **two years of military training** followed by **two years in the reserve**
- They then transferred to the **Landwehr**, a semi-civilian militia force separate from the army
- Members of this organisation received limited training, and the officers were not professionals



PRUSSIAN ARMY & LANDWEHR

Wilhelm wanted to reform the army (more effective) which meant **increasing the military budget**

He wanted to:

- **Double the size of the regular army (300,000)**
- Increase to **63 000** soldiers for military service with **three years training**, followed by **five years in the reserve**
- Merge **Landwehr** with the army to make it more effective & reliable and loyal to the state

This ambitious plan would require a 25% tax increase to fund it

The **Liberals** formed the majority in the **Langtag** (Prussian Assembly)

They opposed the **Army Bill** because:

- A stronger army could be used to suppress them
- Wilhelm may raise taxes without their consent
- **Landwehr** was dominated by middle-class men like themselves, they opposed the merger as the regular army was largely officered by conservative members of the aristocratic **Junker class**

Elections 1861: The liberals, now organised as the **German Progressive Party** agreed to vote funds for only one year

Elections 1862: The **Progressives** won nearly 40% of the seats & clashed once again with the king over the budget -the king faced a **constitutional crisis**:

Wilhelm believed that funds were needed urgently for the army, but the constitution required that taxes be agreed by the **Landtag**

He even considered abdication, rather than give up any of his royal powers

This was where **Otto von Bismarck**, one of the most influential figures in Prussian and German history, became involved in events

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Otto von Bismarck

OTTO VON BISMARCK IN POWER

- Bismarck was a politician and former diplomat, who came from a *Junker* landowning family
- He had made his name as a conservative member of the Prussian United Diet (defended the monarchy against the liberals in the 1848 revolution)
- He was cunning, unprincipled and strong-willed but also emotional and short-tempered
- His preferred form of government was a monarchy with few constitutional restrictions, and he had little patience with parliament
- Bismarck served as a diplomat, representing Prussia in the Diet of the Confederation in 1851, where he was noted for his rudeness and defiance of the Austrian chairman
- He established his standing with other delegates by means of a simple gesture at his first appearance at the Diet: he openly smoked – a privilege which had previously been exercised only by the Austrian

It was now that **Bismarck** was recalled to Berlin to serve as **Minister-President**

The invitation was extended on the initiative of **Albrecht von Roon**, the minister of war, who believed that Bismarck had the strength of personality and intelligence to overcome the budgetary crisis

A controversial and risky choice

He was regarded in government circles as **extreme** and even **reckless**, and Wilhelm had serious reservations about asking for his assistance

By September 1862, however, it was hoped that **Bismarck** could find a way of financing the army reforms while averting the loss of any royal powers

BISMARCK'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS GERMAN UNIFICATION

Bismarck's appointment opened the way to a period in which the cause of German unification made rapid strides

This came as the result of a series of short wars in which Bismarck was the key player: **Prussia** fought against

- Denmark in 1864
- Austria in 1866
- France in 1870–71

It then became the leading state in a new German empire

*Bismarck's role in the achievement of unification has been debated at length by historians. They disagree about the extent to which he set out from the first to unify Germany. Some have judged that **this was always his intention**; others claim that **he was an opportunist who took advantage of successive crises that he did not plan**, but which ended in German unification*

1ST VIEW: BISMARCK HAD PLANNED GERMAN UNIFICATION

The first view sees **Bismarck** as both a **visionary** and a **ruthless planner**

Support for this interpretation comes from his remarks in 1862 to **Benjamin Disraeli**, the British politician and future prime minister

Bismarck said that his first task was to **reorganise the army** and after that he would *'take the first opportunity to declare war with Austria, break the German Confederation, bring the middle and smaller German states under control, and give Germany a national union under Prussia's leadership.'*

These conversations should nonetheless be treated with caution as evidence of Bismarck's political vision

It is unlikely that he would reveal accurately his long-term plans to a British politician whom he knew only slightly

Bismarck might simply have been trying to impress **Disraeli** in the course of a casual conversation

2ND VIEW: BISMARCK HAD NOT PLANNED GERMAN UNIFICATION

The alternative interpretation is that **Bismarck** was primarily concerned with the interests of Prussia

As a *Junker landowner*, he aimed to *maintain Prussia's monarchy* and its *conservative social structure*

He did **not** believe in *German nationalism* for its own sake but only as a way of advancing Prussia's power

On one occasion he said of nationalism that *'this kind of emotional sentimental policy is totally alien to me; I have no time at all for German nationality; I would as soon make war against the kings of Bavaria and Hanover [as] against France.'*

Bismarck was determined that if German unification took place, then it should work to Prussia's advantage

This meant a ***Kleindeutschland*** solution: one in which Austria was excluded from any new German state

BISMARCK'S IMPACT ON PRUSSIAN
POLITICS: RELATIONS WITH WILHELM
I AND THE *LANDTAG*



Otto von Bismarck

BISMARCK, THE KING AND THE LIBERALS

- Although **Bismarck** served the monarchy faithfully, he was often prepared to push policies through against the king's wishes, resorting to tearful, angry outbursts and threats of resignation when he met opposition
- He adopted the persona of an **ultra-conservative servant of the Crown**, while in reality he was skilled at manipulating **Wilhelm**
- **Bismarck** was an intensely arrogant, self-confident individual
- He once said that he would make his own music or none at all, meaning that he would not take orders from others

BISMARCK, THE KING AND THE LIBERALS

- Bismarck promptly resolved the army reform crisis by collecting taxes without parliamentary agreement to a budget
- He delivered a speech to parliament on becoming Minister-President which was to become famous*
- Bismarck intended to show the liberals that they had some common ground with him
- They wanted to see German unity come about at the expense of Austria, and Bismarck wanted to show them that their aims could only be achieved with a strong army
- His words reinforced his image as a ruthless politician who was prepared to govern by force if necessary
- He also undertook repressive measures, including censorship of the press, showing contempt for the liberal belief in the rule of law



The **great questions** of the day
will not be settled by means
of speeches and majority
decisions but **by iron and blood.**

– *Otto von Bismarck*

Bismarck and the **Progressives** in the **Landtag** were in conflict over army reform and, in truth, they had little in common with each other:

The **Progressives** resented Bismarck's willingness to disregard parliamentary convention, his use of the press to manipulate public opinion, and his evident contempt for their political values

His insistence that the king's government must be carried on, and that he would still do so in the absence of an agreement with parliament, was a complete rejection of what they stood for

Elections in 1863: the **Progressives** won 40% of the seats in parliament, but they could not prevent Bismarck from governing without their consent

The only possible basis for a compromise lay in the fact that, for very different reasons, both **Bismarck** and the **Progressives** supported the idea of German unification

If **Bismarck** was successful in achieving this, it was likely that they would place their nationalist beliefs before their liberal principles and give him their support

BISMARCK AND THE PRUSSIAN ARMY

The Prussian army was a vital asset for **Bismarck**

The military was well-respected and was considered an honourable occupation for men of noble families The training of army officers was well organised, requiring their attendance at a military academy for **three year**

Bismarck was assisted in his battle for unification by two outstanding army leaders:

1. Field Marshal **Helmuth von Moltke**, chief of the **general staff**
2. **Albrecht von Roon**, the minister of war

These two men made a formidable team, and it is unlikely that Bismarck would have achieved his aims without their significant contributions

RELATIONS WITH, AND POLICIES
TOWARDS AUSTRIA: WAR WITH
DENMARK AND AUSTRIA



Bismarck's main aim in 1862–66 was to make **Prussia** the dominant power in northern Germany by excluding **Austria** from the region

- He preferred to achieve this peacefully
- Yet was prepared to use force if necessary (only when he had ensured Austria's isolation and was confident of success)

WAR WITH DENMARK, 1864

In 1863, the Danish King **Christian IX**, invaded **Schleswig** attempting to integrate it with Denmark

This angered the German Confederation

Nationalists put forward a German prince, **Duke Frederick of Augustenburg**, as a rival candidate for the position of **Duke of Schleswig- Holstein**



WAR WITH DENMARK, 1864

Bismarck used this to weaken Austria's position and strengthen Prussia

German Confederation forces, led by Prussia and Austria defeated the Danish



WAR WITH DENMARK, 1864

Denmark's big mistake was to believe that Austria and Prussia would not cooperate with each other

Austria had no direct interest in the region, which was geographically much closer to **Prussia**, but, when **Bismarck** proposed joint action against **Denmark**, it had no option but to take part

Bismarck was also confident that other European powers would not intervene in the crisis:

- **France** would almost certainly remain neutral
- **Britain** did not possess a large enough army and did not regard the outcome of the crisis as a vital national interest
- **Russia** likely to help Denmark but in 1863, Bismarck gave diplomatic support to **Tsar Alexander II** in repressing a revolt in **Poland**

Prussia and Austria joined forces to wage a swift war against Denmark in January 1864

Denmark was militarily much weaker than the invaders and, in April, lost the fortress of Düppel after a ten-day siege

An armistice was arranged in the hope of finding an agreed solution

Denmark's refusal to consider a compromise

Bismarck also made sure that Frederick of Augustenburg would not become Duke of Schleswig-Holstein by presenting terms which would have made him a puppet of Prussia, and then blaming him when he turned them down

Fighting resumed in June, leading to a final defeat for Denmark and the surrender of both duchies to Prussia and Austria

WAR WITH DENMARK, 1864

The Treaty of Vienna 1864 was signed – Denmark surrendered Schleswig and Holstein

Bismarck knew that Prussia was not yet strong enough for a conflict with Austria, and he could not be sure of international reaction if he tried to take the duchies by force

He therefore concluded the **Gastein Convention in August 1865** – a temporary agreement

This stated that:

- Prussia was to control Schleswig
- Austria was to control Holstein (which was sandwiched between Schleswig and Prussian territories)
- Prussia was to have right of transit on military roads through Holstein
- Both duchies were to join the Zollverein (even although Austria was not a member)

The treaty was unlikely to work

Austria was unhappy with the terms, particularly as Austrians would have to travel through Prussia to reach Holstein

Some historians claim that the war against Denmark was proof that Bismarck **planned and executed his aims carefully**, using Austria as an ally when needed, but turning against it later

However

In fact, **Christian IX instigated the crisis**, and Bismarck came under great pressure within Prussia to take decisive action

He embarked on the war **without a clear idea of the settlement** that would follow, and the **terms of the treaty were largely a result of Denmark's refusal to compromise**

PREPARING FOR WAR WITH AUSTRIA

Unlike the war against Denmark, Bismarck was largely responsible for the Austro-Prussian War of 1866

- More states were admitted to the *Zollverein* while Austria was still excluded
- Disagreements over the government of Schleswig-Holstein were made public, hoping to stir up anti-Austrian feeling in Prussia
- Knowing that war with Austria was likely to occur, to isolate Austria, he began to seek foreign allies:
 - France
 - Russia
 - Italy

FRANCE

Bismarck travelled to France to meet with the emperor, **Napoleon III**

(a complex character: who aimed to extend French influence in Europe, but also possessed an idealistic sympathy for the aspirations of other nationalities)



Napoleon III & Bismarck at Biarritz 1865

At Biarritz in October 1865, **Napoleon III** decided to remain neutral, but, seeing himself as a champion of the newly united **Italy***, made it a condition:

Prussia would hand **Venetia** (at the time governed by Austria) to **Italy** after the war



Napoleon III expected that a war between **Austria** and **Prussia** would be prolonged, and he believed that **France** would benefit by acting as a **peacemaker**

He wanted an outcome which left neither state as the dominant power in northern Germany

Bismarck's anxiety that **France should not ally with Austria** led him to make some vague promises about French concessions on the **Rhineland**



RUSSIA & ITALY

- Russia would promise to remain neutral in any conflict
- Bismarck did succeed in making an alliance with Italy
- April 1866 -concluded a secret treaty which committed Italy to follow Prussia in going to war with Austria within a three-month period
- Italy was prepared to help Prussia in return for gaining **Venetia**

THE AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN WAR, 1866

- Austria was a more formidable opponent than Denmark, and there were reasons to expect that it might defeat Prussia
- The two sides were fairly evenly matched in terms of numbers of men and weapons

THE AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN WAR, 1866

In early June, the **Austrian government** asked the **Diet** of the **German Confederation** to review the **Schleswig-Holstein** question, which **Bismarck** condemned as a breach of the **Gastein Convention**

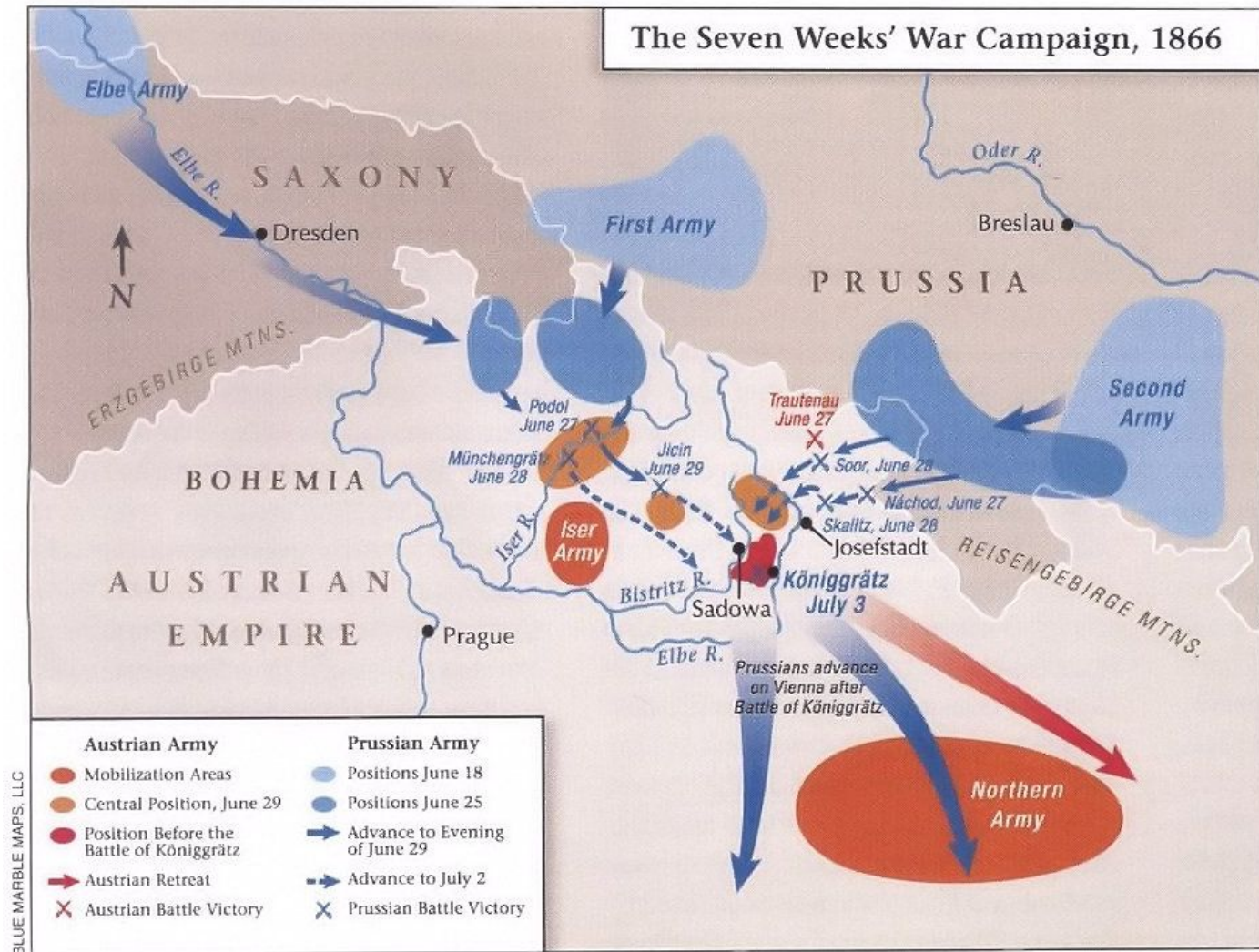
Prussia then sent forces into **Holstein**, whereupon **Austria** called on the **Confederation** for support

When **Hanover**, **Hesse** and **Saxony** sided with **Austria**, **Bismarck** invaded them, rapidly overrunning their territory

- The **Seven Weeks' War** saw just one major decisive battle, at **Königgrätz** (Battle of Koniggratz)
- The Prussian army, commanded by **Moltke** had five railway lines at his disposal to move his troops, whereas Austria had only one line, from Vienna to Bohemia



The Seven Weeks' War Campaign, 1866



PRUSSIAN STRENGTHS

- The **electric telegraph**, helped **Moltke** to direct the advance
- **Training** and **transport** helped the Prussians to victory
- They were well prepared and had better officers, and were able to **move quickly** to take **decisive positions** on the battlefield An Austrian general later observed that *'wars now happen so quickly that what is not ready at the outset will not be made ready in time ... and a ready army is twice as powerful as a half-ready one.'*

PRUSSIAN STRENGTHS

- The Austrian artillery included a large number of guns with rifled barrels which were of better quality than those used by the Prussians

The latter fought in **small units**, however, which reduced the damage caused by the heavy guns

- Perhaps the most important advantage the Prussians had was their **superior infantry tactics and weapons**

Dreyse rifle or **needle gun** – so called because of the shape of the firing pin

- Seven shots a minute
- Reloaded lying down
- Range 600 metres

Old-fashioned rifle muskets used by the Austrians

- only two shots per minute
- Reloaded in a standing position, which exposed the user to enemy fire
- Range was closer to 400 metres

AUSTRIAN WEAKNESSES

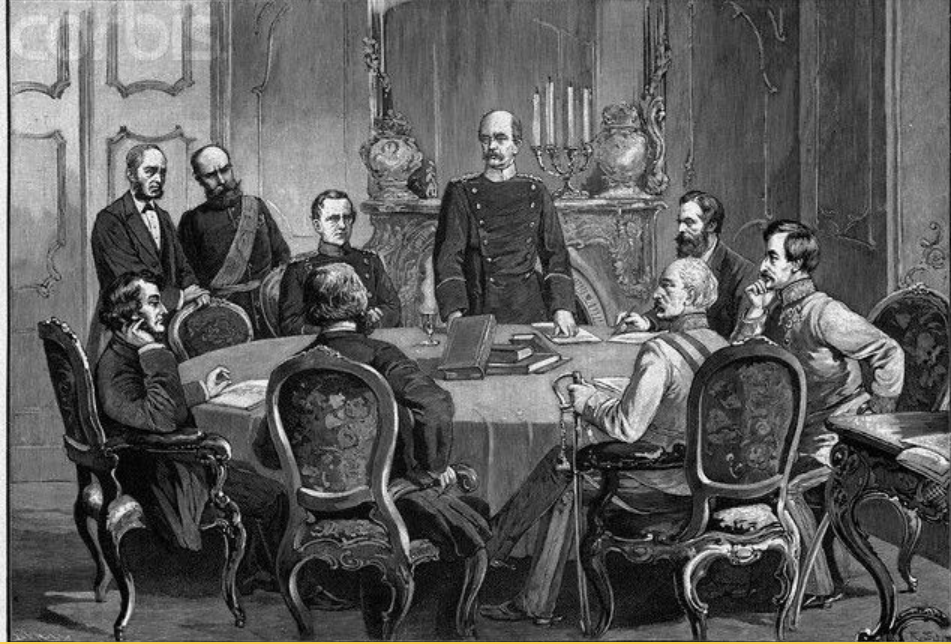
The Austrians had some fundamental weaknesses:

- Austria's army was **slow to mobilise**
- Fear of a war on **two fronts** (Italy in the South) was a major concern for Austria, obliging it to commit 100 000 troops to its southern border
- Austrians were led by an **indecisive commander**, **Ludwig Benedek**

His best hope was to defeat the Prussian First Army before the **other two armies arrived**

By failing to take the initiative in this way, Benedek allowed the Prussians to encircle his forces

OUTCOMES OF THE
AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN WAR: TREATY
OF PRAGUE AND
THE NORTH GERMAN
CONFEDERATION



THE TREATY OF PRAGUE, AUGUST 1866

- The Austrians were quick to seek peace -fearing problems in their multi-ethnic empire
 - Terms were not harsh
 - Others in the Prussian leadership, including the king, favoured a triumphal entrance into **Vienna**
 - **Bismarck**, however, had no desire to humiliate **Austria** by seeking concessions (other than granting Venetia to Italy):
1. He did not want to make it a permanent enemy of Prussia rather a **future ally** (if France or Russia decide to intervene)
 2. Austria's dissolution might also create a dangerous power vacuum in southern Europe (Austria was **holding together a collection of disparate national groups**)

THE TREATY OF PRAGUE, AUGUST 1866

- Signed on 23rd August, 1866, Prague
- The treaty allowed Bismarck to replace the Austrian-dominated German Confederation with the North German Confederation
- This was not an association of free states, but a political union in which Prussia simply took over the states north of the **River Main**: Hesse-Cassel, Nassau, Hanover, the city of Frankfurt and Schleswig-Holstein



THE TREATY OF PRAGUE, AUGUST 1866

- Several rulers, including the king of **Hanover**, were deposed, as Bismarck was not prepared to run the risk of these royal families recovering and seeking revenge
- **Saxony** retained its king, Johann I, and some limited independence within the Confederation (a special concession won by Austria on behalf of its leading German ally)

THE NORTH GERMAN CONFEDERATION

- The new **Confederation** established **Prussian power over an additional 4 million people** in northern Germany
- The **king of Prussia** had control over the **Confederation's foreign policy** and decisions about **war and peace**
- The Confederation was to be governed by a **Federal Council (*Bundesrat*)**, representing the states, and a **parliament (*Reichstag*)**, elected by universal male suffrage
- While the parliament was supposed to be democratic and was given some powers, the reality was that Prussia dominated the **Confederation**, under **Bismarck's** direction
- He was appointed **Federal Chancellor**, a post which was theoretically responsible to the ***Reichstag*** but in practice **answered to the king of Prussia as president of the Confederation**
- The ***Reichstag*** had no control over military spending, which amounted to 90% of the annual budget

THE NORTH GERMAN CONFEDERATION

The independence of the southern German states (Bavaria, Baden and Württemberg) was guaranteed

Bismarck openly stated that he had no plans to incorporate the southern states and unify all of Germany:

- He did not want to **provoke a hostile reaction from France** by going too far
- He might also have felt that the new **Confederation needed time to establish** itself before Catholic south German states were admitted
- Bismarck **did not want to risk a dilution of Prussia's traditional culture**
- He was aware that there was **strong resistance to Prussia's values**, which many southern Germans summarised as *'pay taxes, be a soldier, and keep your mouth shut'*

THE NORTH GERMAN CONFEDERATION

Bismarck did, however, take steps to strengthen the links between north and south:

1. He set up an elected body to represent both parts of the country in matters of trade -*Zollparlament* (1868–70) (Prussia retained control through its presidency of the *Zollverein*)
2. *A military alliance* -which would be important when Bismarck went to war with France in 1870

If they faced a common threat, their armies and railways would come under Prussian control

THE NORTH GERMAN CONFEDERATION

Victory over Austria also made **Bismarck** popular with the Prussian liberals

A large number of them formed the **National Liberal Party**, recognising that '*blood and iron*' had achieved partial German unification where their methods had failed

Not all conservative *Junkers* supported the new Confederation but moderate members of their grouping established the **Free Conservatives**, who supported **Bismarck's** plans

THE NORTH GERMAN CONFEDERATION

In September 1866, **Bismarck** introduced an **indemnity bill** to legalise his actions in raising taxes without parliamentary approval over the previous four years, and only seven members of the Prussian Diet voted against it

Support from **moderate liberals** and **flexible conservatives** left the hard-liners at both extremes isolated

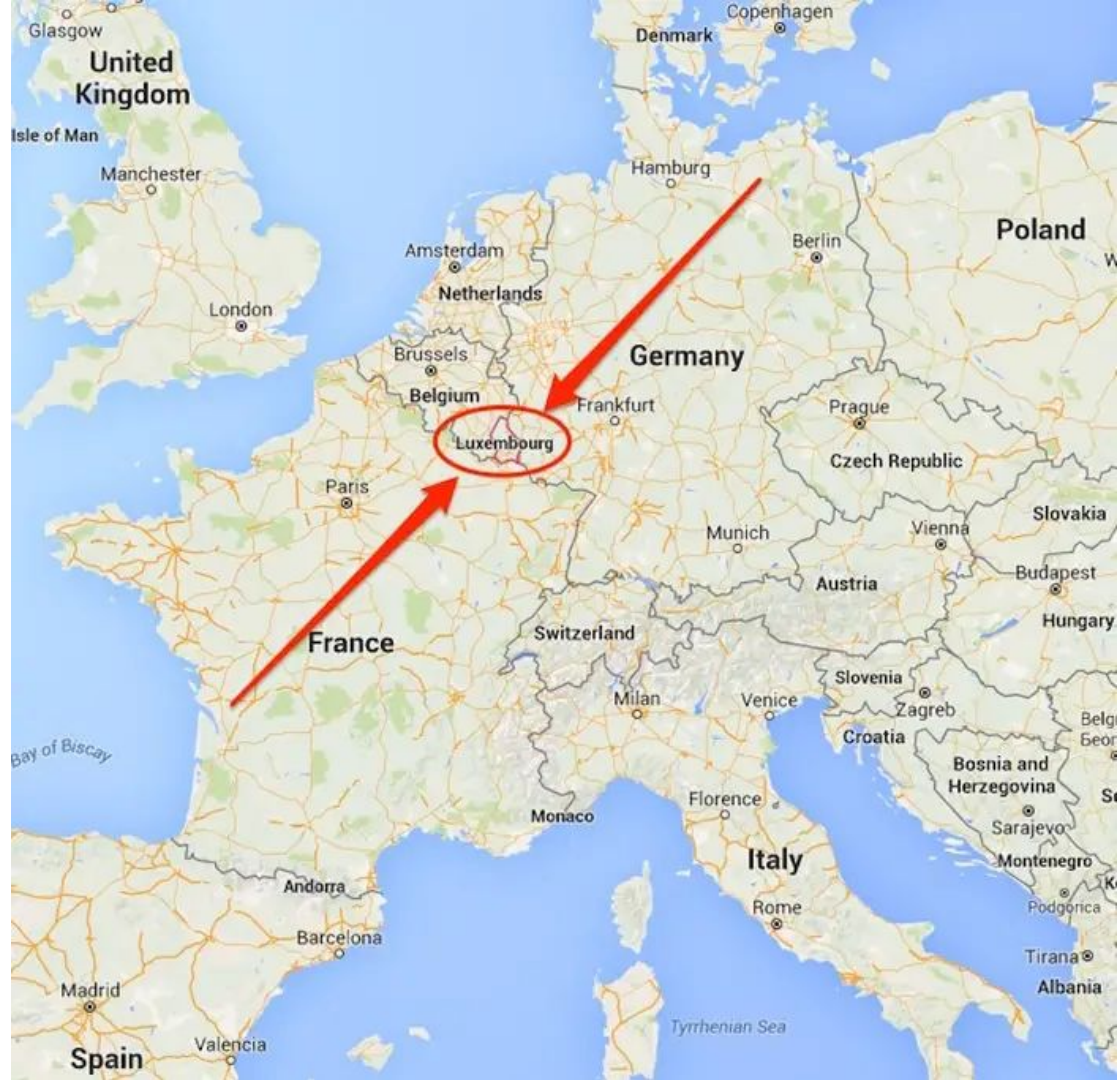
3.4 HOW AND WHY WAS THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY ACHIEVED BY 1871?

BISMARCK'S DIPLOMACY TOWARDS FRANCE



- Relations between Prussia and France deteriorated after the **Austro-Prussian War**
- **Napoleon III** was under pressure from French public opinion to gain some compensation for enduring this powerful neighbour on his eastern border
- **Bismarck** turned down Napoleon's attempt to acquire part of the **Rhineland**, which belonged to Bavaria and Hesse
- Instead, he encouraged him to turn his attention to the Duchy of **Luxembourg**, an independent state (after the dissolution of German Confederation) whose ruler was the king of the Netherlands
- Some of the inhabitants were German-speaking, and a Prussian garrison was stationed there





Bismarck then deliberately whipped up German public opinion to prevent the deal between France and the Netherlands from going through

A conference held in London in May 1867 resulted in Luxembourg being declared a neutral state

The Prussian garrison was withdrawn

Bismarck had provoked **Napoleon III** into possible future aggression

The south German states – still independent at the time – were horrified to discover that Napoleon wanted to take control of Luxembourg, and turned against France

SIDE NOTE ON LUXEMBOURG:

In 1866 the [German Confederation](#) was dissolved, and Luxembourg became an entirely [sovereign](#) nation, though the Prussian garrison remained in the capital. [Napoleon III](#) of [France](#) then tried to purchase the grand duchy from [William III](#). The two rulers had already agreed on the sum of five million florins when William III backed out because the Prussian chancellor, [Otto von Bismarck](#), disapproved of the sale. The great powers soon came to a compromise ([London](#); May 11, 1867): Prussia had to withdraw its garrison from the capital, the fort would be dismantled, and Luxembourg would become an independent nation.

THE HOHENZOLLERN CANDIDATURE AND THE OUTBREAK OF WAR



Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern

THE SPANISH SUCCESSION CRISIS

In 1868, the Spanish queen, Isabella, was forced to abdicate by politicians who wanted an end to the rule of the Bourbon royal family in their country

They selected Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern as their new monarch

Leopold was from a south German state and a Catholic, like the Spanish, but he was also related to the Prussian royal family

Encouraged by Bismarck, Leopold accepted the offer – a move that was certain to incite French anger as a further example of Prussian expansionism*

THE SPANISH SUCCESSION CRISIS

A major international incident occurred in early July 1870, when a document announcing Leopold's acceptance arrived in Madrid at a time when the Spanish parliament was not in session

Napoleon should not have heard the news until the Spanish had publicly chosen Leopold

The French government concluded that there was a Prussian plot to encircle France and so put Wilhelm under pressure to persuade Leopold to withdraw

THE SPANISH SUCCESSION CRISIS

The king sent Bismarck a telegram describing a meeting about the matter he had just had with Benedetti, the French ambassador, at the spa town of Ems

When he received the **Ems Telegram** - Bismarck saw an opportunity **to portray France as the unreasonable party in the negotiations**

He changed the original wording of the telegram to make it appear that the **French were demanding a humiliating pledge from Prussia never to support any future renewal of Leopold's candidature**

Moltke, who was present when Bismarck edited the telegram, instantly grasped the important difference between the two versions. *'Now it has a different ring,' he declared. 'It sounded before like a parley [a negotiation]; now it is like a flourish in answer to a challenge.'*

THE OUTBREAK OF WAR AGAINST FRANCE, JULY 1870

Bismarck then released the telegram in both Germany and France -public outrage in both countries

Resolving the situation became a matter of national honour

Urged on by public opinion, **Napoleon** decided on war (an outcome of **Bismarck's** manipulation of the **Ems Telegram**)

REASONS FOR THE PRUSSIAN VICTORY IN THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR, 1870-71



FRENCH ISOLATION

France's decision to initiate war in July 1870 was a risky decision

Despite attempts to establish alliances, France was relatively isolated

It was seen as the aggressor while Prussia claimed only to be defending itself

- **Britain** refused to offer support, believing that France was not justified in going to war over the Spanish throne
- **Italy** also refused to come to France's aid while French soldiers were still present in its country, defending Rome on behalf of the Pope

Rome was the last area in the peninsula to remain independent of the new **Italian state**, and its leaders wanted the French to withdraw so that they could take it over

- **Russia** decided to remain neutral after Bismarck signalled a willingness to help secure a revision of the treaty which had ended the Crimean War
- **Austria** had been weakened by its defeat in 1866 and was now focusing on its empire in south-eastern Europe

FRENCH ISOLATION

By contrast

- The German national movement supported Prussia
- The south German states committed their troops to the war, viewing France as a threat to the whole of Germany, and they fought as well as their Prussian allies

Prussia was able to move half a million troops to the French border while their opponents had only 250 000 men concentrated in the Rhineland

PRUSSIAN MILITARY SUPERIORITY

- Rapid mobilisation and effective preparation for war
- Short-term, universal conscription with intensive training
- Improved artillery

Moltke had learned from his army's experience at the hands of the Austrians, and had adopted rifled, steel breech-loading field guns, which outclassed the French in terms of range, accuracy and rate of fire

THE FRENCH

France had some advantages in terms of weaponry:

The recently issued *Chassepot* rifle was superior to the Prussian needle gun, with an effective range of 1400 metres and a more rapid rate of fire

At the Battle of Gravelotte, for example, in August 1870, the Prussians suffered 20 000 casualties, most of them victims of the *Chassepot*, in return for fewer than 8000 French losses

The French also possessed an early kind of machine gun, the *Mitrailleuse*, but their troops had not learned how to deploy it effectively in support of infantry

FRENCH MILITARY INFERIORITY

- Their **battlefield tactics were faulty**

They concentrated their troops in prepared defensive positions and controlled their rate of fire as the enemy approached. This approach played into the hands of the more mobile Prussians

- French leaders **lacked effective means of command and control** over their forces
- Their army reservists had to proceed to depots **to collect equipment before moving** to the points where they were meant to assemble
- They **lacked maps of their own country**, having only been issued with maps of Germany, as they expected soon to be crossing the border to win a swift victory
- Relied on long- serving professionals, **recruited by annual lottery**
- Its reserve force, the **Garde Mobile**, **undertook only 14 days of training** each year

In short, France's leaders could not make up their minds whether to fight an offensive or a defensive war Their lack of a clear strategy proved fatal to their prospects

EVENTS

These improvements helped the Prussians and their allies to win the decisive battle of Sedan, near the Belgian border, in September 1870

Here a French army of 100 000 men was encircled and shelled into submission by the Prussian artillery
The French lost 17 000 troops while Prussian casualties were closer to 8000

Napoleon III surrendered to Bismarck

He was then forced to abdicate, after news of the defeat prompted a revolution in Paris and the establishment of a republican government

The war took a different turn with the decision of the new republican government in Paris to hold out against the invaders in the capital city through the winter. In the countryside, the French used guerrilla warfare to harass Prussian forces

The siege of Paris demonstrated the ruthlessness of the Prussians

A combination of starvation, exhaustion and prolonged artillery bombardment finally led to surrender in January 1871

The republic tried to recruit a new army but failed to find enough trained officers, and the ill-disciplined force was soon defeated

CREATION OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE, 1871



THE NEW GERMANY

- As a result of the war with France, **Germany was fully united**
- This was not, however, entirely a triumph for German nationalism
- **Prussia** remained the dominant state in the new Germany
- It was a ***kleindeutsch*** solution to the German problem, with **Austria** excluded from the new Reich
- Some southern states were still reluctant to be part of a '**Greater Germany**' and thus come under Prussian control

THE NEW GERMANY

Bismarck had to make some concessions to persuade them to join the union:

- ❖ **Bavaria**, the largest southern state, sought special powers to retain a degree of independence, including control over its own armed forces
- ❖ Bismarck also gave money to its king, **Ludwig II**, who was heavily in debt and open to bribery
- ❖ The funds for this came from the confiscated fortune of the king of **Hanover**, who had been forced to abandon his throne and flee to **Austria** after unwisely backing the latter in the war of 1866

THE NEW GERMANY

- The *Junkers* feared that Prussia would have less power and influence in a larger Germany
- There was an argument about the exact title that **Wilhelm** would take
- He wanted to be known as '**Emperor of Germany**' but was eventually proclaimed '**German Emperor**' or **Kaiser** in January 1871, at a ceremony held in the Hall of Mirrors in the royal palace of Versailles
- Bismarck preferred this title because it did not sound as though Prussia was making an unreasonable claim to authority over the south German states, whose cooperation he needed
- The choice of venue was symbolic, as it was a visible sign of France's humiliation

THE TREATMENT OF FRANCE

Bismarck took advantage of France's weakness to impose harsh peace terms:

- The defeated country was required to pay a sum of 5 billion francs as **reparations** (a German army was posted in northern France until this was paid)
- The border province of **Alsace-Lorraine**, were conceded to Germany, mainly to give the newly unified state security against the possibility of a French war of revenge
- The annexed territory was a **buffer zone** between France and the states of **Bavaria**, **Württemberg** and **Baden**
- Its acquisition was part of a strategy of labelling France as an **aggressor**, which must be seen to be punished as part of the peace settlement
- **Bismarck** had decided that, unlike Austria, France could never develop into an ally in the future, and so the relationship must be based purely on superior strength

THE TREATMENT OF FRANCE

This created a lingering resentment on the part of the French

A statue in the centre of Paris, representing the Alsatian city of Strasbourg, was permanently shrouded in black as a reminder to the population of the loss they had suffered

The French desire to avenge the loss of the two provinces was a long-term cause of the tensions which would lead to the First World War**

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NEW REICH

- The new Reich was very different from the national state for which German liberals had struggled in the revolutionary years of 1848–49
- This time, the imperial crown was being offered to a Prussian king by his peer group, the princes, rather than by a popular assembly
- Unity had been imposed by means of force from above, not achieved from below by the people

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NEW REICH

- The constitution was modelled on that of the North German Confederation
- Prussia had a deciding voice in the **Bundesrat** since it was allocated 17 out of a total of 58 votes, and 14 votes were sufficient to block any new proposals
- It also had a majority of the seats in the **Reichstag**
- **The king of Prussia** was the **Kaiser** and **commander-in-chief** of the **armed forces**
- **Bismarck** was appointed as **Imperial Chancellor** and remained the effective decision-maker in Germany until his downfall in 1890

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NEW REICH

- The heads of the government departments, such as the treasury, justice and the interior, were designated as state secretaries who answered to the chancellor, rather than acting as a team of equal ministers
- As Prussian **foreign minister**, **Bismarck** was also in control of Germany's external policy
- On the other hand, the individual states retained a number of powers, for example over direct taxation, education and welfare policies, and their local parliaments had different relationships with the government in each of the states
- It was a *Fürstenbund* or confederation of sovereign principalities
- The imperial government was granted certain specific, but important powers: over foreign policy, peace and war, and control of the customs system